AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-47. (canceled)

48. (new) An integrated communications application arranged in use to associate one or more means of communicating with one or more entities with selected information included within a range of information selected by a user in another application operating in the same environment as the integrated communications application, the range of information having been copied by the user to a shared memory buffer, wherein the other application is configured to at least write to the said shared memory buffer and the integrated communications application is configured to at least read from the said shared memory buffer, the integrated communications application further comprising:

means arranged to extract said selected information from within said range of information stored in the shared buffer; and

means arranged to process said extracted information to determine if the selected information included within said range of information selected by the user comprises one or more of a plurality of data-types.

49. (new) An application as claimed in claim 48, wherein a said one or more of a plurality of data-types comprise communications-related data-types and are associated with means to communicate with said one or more entities.

50. (new) An application as claimed in claim 48, wherein a said one or more of a plurality of data-types represent a data-type which is related to an identifiable characteristic of an entity.

51. A method communicating with an entity, the method comprising:

a user operating a terminal to open an application which displays textual information on a screen;

the user selecting a range of text from the displayed textual information;

the user copying the range of text to a buffer available to at least one other application;

determining if a text string within the range of the text in the buffer conforms to a predetermined data-type associated with an entity; and

in the event the predetermined data-type associated with an entity comprises a communications-related data-type associated with an identified means to communicate with the entity, initiating communication with the entity using said means to communicate; and

otherwise if the pre-determined data-type comprises a data-type which is not related to a means of communication, determining an associated communications-related data-type for the entity and initiating communication with the entity using a predetermined means to communicate associated with the associated communications-related data-type.

52. (new) A method as claimed in claim 51, wherein in said step of determining if the text-string conforms to a predetermined data-type, the text-string in the buffer is read and another application determines if the text-string conforms to a predetermined data-type associated with an entity.

53. (new) A method as claimed in claim 52, wherein the buffer contents are read and copied by said other application into its own memory means.

54. (new) A method as claimed in claim 51, wherein the step of initiating communication with the entity using said means to communicate comprises automatically using said means to communicate without further action by the user.

55. (new) A method as claimed in claim 51, wherein the step of initiating communication is controlled by the user performing an additional action.

56. (new) A method as claimed in claim 51, wherein the predetermined means to communicate are configured such that either:

a set of predetermined preferences are established by the user which are used to determine a default predetermined means to communicate with the entity; and/or

a default means of communication is determined by the user.

57. (new) A method as claimed in claim 48, wherein the method further comprises a step of associating the means of communication determined from the data-type with another means of communication, and in said step of initiating communication use said other means of communication.

58. (new) A method as claimed in claim 57, wherein instead said means of communication are first initiated, and only if said first means of communication is not successful in enabling the user to communicate with the entity is said other means of communication automatically initiated.

59. (new) A method of enabling a user to select an action to be performed on information included within a range of information selected by the user, the method comprising the steps of:

the user selecting the range of information; and

automatically determining if within the range of information, some information conforms to a predetermined set of format rules;

processing the information items conforming to said predetermined set of format rules;

associating each said one or more processed information items with one or more communication options;

associating each communication option with an application enabling said communication option to be activated.

60. (new) A method as claimed in claim 59, wherein said communication option is activated by a single user-determined action.

61. (new) A method as claimed in claim 60, wherein said single user-determined action is taken from the group consisting of:

a single activation click by a computer mouse-type device;

a single key press on a computer keyboard;

a single voice command.

62. (new) A method as claimed in claim 59, wherein the user selects the information by storing the selected information in a memory store.

63. (new) A method as claimed in claim 59, wherein the user selects the information by dragging and dropping the information into a suitable application interface.

64. (new) A method as claimed in claim 59, wherein the application enabling said communication option to be activated comprises a click-dial application.

65. (new) A method as claimed in claim 48 wherein each information item is associated with a communication option by reference to a database selected from a set of one or more databases.

66. (new) A method as claimed in claim 65, wherein said communication option is further associated with a second communication option by reference to a database selected from a set of one or more databases.

67. (new) A method as claimed in claim 59, wherein a said information item comprises a telephone number associated with an entity, and said communication option comprises an alternative method of contacting said entity.

68. (new) A method as claimed in claim 67, wherein said alternative method of contacting said entity comprises selecting an action to be performed on one or more of the following information items:

an alternative telephone number;

an electronic mail address;

an instant messenger address;

a postal address;

an instant messaging address;

an internet URL associated with the entity.

69. (new) A method as claimed in claim 68, wherein said information item comprises an entity's name, and said method of communication comprises dialling at least one telephone number for the entity.

70. (new) A method as claimed in claim 59, wherein if said method of communication determines a first means for communication which is not successful, then a second means of communication is determined and automatically activated.

71. (new) A method as claimed in claim 70, wherein said method of communication is determines means for communication which comprise means arranged to enable a user to dial a telephone number for an entity, and if the entity cannot be contacted by said dialled telephone number, the user is prompted to record a message which can be communicated by electronic mail to the intended recipient automatically.

72. (new) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein the message is converted to text and included in the electronic mail.

73. (new) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein the message is attached to the electronic mail in an audio format.

74. (new) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein a list of information items is generated, each information item being associated automatically with at least one means of contacting the entity, whereby the user is able to select an information item and/or its associated communication option and contact the entity by a single action performed on the representation of the communication option provided graphically to the user.

75. (new) A method as claimed in claim 71, whereby a user is able to select a plurality of information items, each item having the same type of communication option and is able to contact simultaneously all entities so selected using a suitably modified version of said communication option.

76. (new) A method as claimed in claim 75, whereby a user is able to select to conference call several entities in a telephone call by simultaneously selecting said plurality of entities with a single action.

77. (new) A method as claimed in claim 76, whereby a user is able to select to electronically email several entities by selecting information whose filtered information items generates an email communication option for said several entities.

78. (new) A suite of one or more computer programs which when executed alone or collectively are arranged to implement steps in a method according to claim 48.

79. (new) A client application comprising software arranged to implement steps in a method according to claim 59 in a distributed computer system.

80. (new) A distributed computer system comprising a client terminal and a database facility, the client terminal being arranged to implement steps in a method according to claim 59, whereby said steps of associated said one or more information items are performed by said client terminal communicating said information items with said database to enable at least one database record structure to be determined associated with a said information item to derive at least one communication options associated by said record with said information item.

81. (new) A method of integrating communication means in a computer-telephony environment, the method comprising:

processing a text-string derived from a range of textual information a user has selected to copy to a shared buffer application;

determining if the text string in the buffer conforms to a predetermined data-type associated with an entity by comparing the text-string with textual information

associated with the predetermined data-base, the textual information comprising a component of a record stored in database; and

in the event a predetermined data-type is associated with an entity,

if the data-type is associated with an identified means to communicate with the entity, initiating communication with the entity using said associated means to communicate and the text-string selected by the user; and

otherwise if the pre-determined data-type comprises an identified entity, initiating communication with the entity using a predetermined means to communicate determined by further associating the data-type with a data-type associated with said predetermined means to communicate.

82. (new) A method as claimed in claim 81, wherein a data-type is associated with a plurality of means to communicate with the entity, and each said communication means are initiated in a predetermined order if the first communications means is not successful in establishing communication with the entity.

83. (new) A memory-facility arranged to enable a user operating a user-terminal to communicate with at least one entity using one or more communication means associated with said user-terminal, the memory-facility being arranged to interface with a plurality of applications whose operation is supported by said user-terminal, wherein one of said plurality of applications comprises a communications application arranged to associate one or more communication means with information selected by said user from a range of information provided by one or more others of said plurality of applications, the memory-facility comprising:

memory means arranged to store a range of information selectively copied by the user and written to said shared memory by said one or more others of said plurality of applications; and

means arranged to share said memory with at least said communications application and to enable said communications application to read information from the said shared memory, said read information enabling at least one available

communication means to be selected by the communications application to enable the user communicate with said entity.

84. (new) A memory-facility as claimed in claim 83, wherein the read information enables at least one available communications means to be automatically selected by the communications application.

85. (new) A memory-facility as claimed in claim 83, wherein the information selected by the user comprises textual information.

86. (new) A memory facility as claimed in claim 83, wherein the information selected by the user comprises an image.

87. (new) A memory facility as claimed in claim 83, wherein said read information comprises selected information and said buffer facility further comprises:

means arranged to extract selected information from the shared buffer; and

means arranged to process said extracted information to determine if the user selected information can be determined to comprise one or more of a plurality of data-types.

88. (new) A communications application arranged in use for operation on a user-terminal capable of communicating over a communications network with one or more other entities, the communications application comprising:

means arranged to associate one or more means of communicating with one or more entities with information within a range of information selected by a user in another application operating in the same environment, the range of information selected having been copied by the user to a shared memory, wherein said other application is configured to at least write to the said shared memory and the communications application is configured to at least read from said shared memory;

means arranged to extract selected textual information from the range of information stored in said shared memory; and

means arranged to process said extracted information to determine if the user selected textual information can be determined to comprise one or more of a plurality of data-types.

89. (new) A method of communicating with one or more entities using a terminal operated by a user and capable of forming one or more connections to a communications network, the method comprising the steps of:

the user selecting a range of information from a display; copying the selected information to a buffer; processing the information to determine from the context of the copied information, a communications address for each of said one or more entities; and

automatically initiating a communications application associated with each communications address identified, to enable the user to communicate with said one or more entities.

90. (new) A method as claimed in claim 89, wherein at least one communications address comprises one of the following:

an email address;

a telephone number; and

a video-communications address.

91. (new) A method as claimed in claim 88, wherein, the selected information copied comprises a text-string.

92. (new) A method as claimed in claim 88, wherein the selected information copied includes an image.

93. (new) A method as claimed in claim 92, wherein said image is capable of being associated with at least one communications address.

94. (new) An intelligent buffer is provided in which the buffer is arranged to receive a text-string selected by a method according to the previous aspect.